

## Minutes from Russell School Committee Meeting

Monday, December 19, 2022, 6:30-8:00pm

Hybrid: Hadley Public Library Community Room and Zoom

In attendance: Courtney Meyer, Emma Dragon, Alan Weinberg

Absent: Carolyn Holstein, Dan Regish, Amy Parsons (SB liaison)

1. Approval of 11-28 minutes
  - a. Unanimously approved
  
2. Grant updates
  - a. Carolyn and Courtney attended an informational session about the MPPF grant. Seems like a lot of work for a little money, but might still be worth pursuing. One thing to note is that application needs to be for the item that is the most needed, ie: tending to the roof before the windows. Carolyn has more info to share, but wasn't able to join tonight's meeting. Preservation restriction needs to be in place in order to receive funds from them. Hold off on pursuing until after survey closes on 1-5. Deadline is March 17.
  - b. Guest: Mary Thayer from CPA
    - i. Mary is the chair of the CPA, one of nine members.
    - ii. If there's a majority vote to approve funding for our project, it won't be official until it's approved (50+% vote) at town meeting.
    - iii. CPA money comes from 3% surcharge on real estate taxes, match is provided by fee at registry of deeds. This surcharge is likely to increase over the years. Available (and also reserved) funds at May town meeting are expected to be \$20,053,000; potential for 80% of remaining \$ for our project.
      1. 10% of funds are reserved for three set-asides, with housing, historic, and open-air space/recreation as categories. \$238,000 into housing (\$240,000 for principal and interest). Max available would be \$1,245,000 for new CPA projects.
    - iv. Bonding is a possibility. Under state and town bylaw, we can bond for additional town projects. Contact town treasurer, Linda Sanderson, if we're interested in bonding. Would need  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote at town meeting for bonding. Hopkins bond for the new fields still needs to be paid.
    - v. Linda works with David Eisenthal, financial advisor services. David did a presentation at the [CPA's 12-12-22 meeting](#) about do's and don'ts for bonding. He spoke 8:30-9pm. David said you probably don't want to bond

for less than \$1 million. CPA just pays their portion of it. Alan asked: if another bond was approved, say for ten years, excl. Hopkins, does it also not include any potential funding from regular nonbonded available funds? Ie: we could potentially get approved for \$500,000, then another ten years bonded, to make a million? Mary: Yes.

- vi. Mass community preservation coalition did [CPA bootcamp](#) in the fall of 2021, Mary participated.
- vii. Re: taxes, if CPA \$ is approved, it's a go, no tax increases. Even if you bond, it doesn't affect the tax rate. The most we can bond depends on how much \$ is put in for CPA funds. We cannot bond against the state contribution to CPA funds.
- viii. Interest rate and the terms. David said rates took on 1 1/4 to 4 1/2%
- ix. How many years? Ballpark: Ten years: max is \$1 million, there's a cost to that, in addition to \$220,000 to borrow.
- x. 20 years: max is up to \$2,400,000; that's the outside range. We'd still have a state match.
- xi. Max available for CPA 2023 \$1,245,000; max bonding for ten years\*
- xii. In the 17 years in CPA, the town has received a total of \$6 million+, \$4 million coming from the date, plus \$2 million from the state.
- xiii. Feb 1 application deadline, application reviews/CPA meetings are Feb 13 and 27.

### 3. Survey update

- a. Alison entered paper surveys received to date. 550 responses collected in all!
- b. Breakdowns to request from Alison
  - i. Courtney noticed that it seems as though one person who would like to demo the building has been filling out the survey a few times each week, which may skew the results. Because the surveys were anonymous, perhaps we could pull the results from a certain date to eliminate this person's repeated survey answers.
  - ii. Separate out folks who don't have connection to the town (don't work/reside/pass through)
  - iii. Also separate out folks who don't pay taxes in the town (all who don't reside here??)

### 4. New business

- a. We may need to either change the start time for the next meeting (we're considering 5:30pm) to accommodate the closing of the library, as Alan may not

be available to lock up. Or we will need to change the location of the meeting. Courtney will reach out to those who did not attend the meeting to check their availability.

5. Next meeting:

- a. January 9, 2023, 6:30pm (or 5:30pm?) at the library and on Zoom
  - i. To work on CPA application and review survey results at this meeting. Ask Alison to send survey results to us in advance.
- b. January 23, 6:30pm at the library and on Zoom
  - i. To finalize CPA application for Feb 1 deadline

Meeting adjourned at 7:13pm

Respectfully submitted by Courtney Meyer, Chair

\* Email from Mary Thayer post-meeting clarifying the numbers:

“Last fall the interest rate was estimated to be around 4.25 (10 yr bond) to 4.5% (15 or 20 year bond) for a bond started in the fall of 2023, the estimate may be higher now. If we receive an application that may want us to consider bonding, we will reach out to the town treasurer for updated information and advice.

The longer the bond term, the more that can be borrowed, and the higher the interest cost over the life of the bond.

Estimated caps on bonding (if use ALL of the estimated annual CPA contribution of the town's portion, after using the town's portion to pay the \$750,000 bond for the Hopkins fields, if the Hopkins' bond is for the same terms as well):

\$1,000,000 for a 10 year bond, total interest cost \$243,661

\$1,800,000 for a 15 year bond, total interest cost \$678,578

\$2,400,000 for a 20 year bond, total interest cost \$1,244,060.

We received a second round of state match. By the 2023 annual town meeting, I anticipate \$1,291,000 max. would be available for historic project(s) without bonding IF there were no other projects, and IF the CPA Committee and town meeting were willing to deplete the fund except for some funds in the other two set asides, and \$500,000 that is in reserve.

A project can have a mix of funds taken out of the CPA available fund and a portion borrowed, as happened with the Hopkins' fields project.”